



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS ORGANIZATION
DISMANTLED IN MULTI-DISTRICT TAKEDOWN**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced the indictment of 15 members of an international heroin and cocaine trafficking organization responsible for the importation and distribution of several million dollars worth of narcotics per month. The indictments announced today mark the culmination of a nine-month joint effort by law enforcement authorities in the United States and Colombia that has resulted in the arrests of dozens of narcotics traffickers operating primarily in the Northeastern United States, Puerto Rico, and Colombia.

Those indicted in the Southern District of New York include Medellin, Colombia-based defendants BALMORE DE JESUS ESCOBAR GUTIERREZ, a/k/a "Jesus," a/k/a "Chucho," and LUIS GUILLERMO SALAZAR-DIEZ, a/k/a "El Flaco," who are alleged to be

responsible for importing heroin and cocaine into the United States for distribution by New York-based members of the organization. It is further alleged that the New York-based members of the organization used vehicles fitted with sophisticated hidden compartments to transport multi-kilogram quantities of narcotics to distributors in smaller cities including Buffalo, New York; Springfield, Massachusetts; Hartford, Connecticut; and Providence, Rhode Island.

The New York-based defendants include LUIS MANUEL REINOSO, a/k/a "Fernando," JUAN CASTILLO, a/k/a "Frank," a/k/a "El Pequeno," WILLIAM CASTILLO, a/k/a "Wilmar," JOHN PEREIRA, a/k/a "Johnny," MAURICIO CORREA, a/k/a "Mauro," DANIEL MARTINEZ, a/k/a "Danny," GIOVANNI BETANCES, a/k/a "Jovan," JOSE POLANCO, a/k/a "Fat Joe," FRANCISCO LORA, a/k/a "Frank," EDWIN SANCHEZ, and GERALDO GARCIA-LEONARDO.

The Indictments announced today are part of Operation Deja Vu, a collaborative effort by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), United States Customs Service (USCS), the Colombian National Police, United States Attorney's Offices in eight judicial districts, and a host of state and local law enforcement agencies. A total of 67 defendants have been arrested as part of the takedown of Operation Deja Vu, including 13 of the 15 defendants indicted in the Southern District of New York. In addition, law enforcement authorities have seized

approximately \$7 million worth of heroin and cocaine and \$438,420 in U.S. currency.

Mr. COMEY praised the efforts of all of the domestic law enforcement agencies involved in Operation Deja Vu and the cooperation and assistance of the Colombian National Police.

Assistant United States Attorneys JOSHUA A. LEVINE, ANIRUDH BANSAL and ERIC SNYDER are in charge of the prosecution in the Southern District of New York, which is under the direction of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("OCDETF").

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